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First Since 1946

Congressional Reorganization Draws Nearer

Monroney Group's Suggestions Will Be Heard Next Spring

By MARSHALL McNEIL, Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18—Reforms intended to make Congress better able to deal with multiplying problems of the space age will be recommended early next spring, according to Sen. Mike Monroney, Oklahoma Democrat.



committee on reorganization of Congress. Mr. Monroney helped draft the last reorganization act of nearly 20 years ago. The committee has completed its hearings. Experts in and out of Congress proposed nearly every reform anyone has ever talked about including the increase of representatives' two-year terms to four years and one calling for mandatory retirement at age 70.

Out of this mass of proposals, Mr. Monroney hopes the committee will be able to agree on a program which will be recommended to both House and Senate.

He evidently foresees no sensational or dramatic innovations to be approved by the committee, but, rather, changes in operation and procedure to handle the task that now overwhelm members of both houses.

The committee is precluded from proposing changes in the rules of either house, although there still is wide clamor in the Senate for making it easier to choke off a filibuster, and some demand in both houses to put an end to nepotism.

Updating Possible

The joint committee may end up proposing merely an updating of the 1946 Reorganization Act.

That law was intended to cut down the number of committees in both houses, but instead led to a marvelous proliferation of committees. There are fewer standing committees now, because of that old law, but these have spawned scores of subcommittees, each with its own row to hoe, its own large or small staff, its own experts and its own expense account.

Mr. Monroney suggests this problem of committee proliferation might be met obliquely by limiting the number on which a senator, for example, could serve, so as to cut down the work loads of individual members.

He's intrigued with the idea of creating special commissions or committees with

some type of computer system through which the problems of the annual 100-billion-dollar-plus Federal budgets can be better handled. In this area, the committee might revert to an old suggestion that the government have two budgets: One covering capital expenses, the other normal operating expenses.

The twin problems of getting more help for individual senators, and more experts to advise them on legislation affecting space, science, aviation, foods and drugs may also figure in the committee's proposals.

Separate Sessions

It is considering a suggestion from Sen. Warren Magnuson, Washington Democrat, for holding separate sessions, one to handle legislation, the other appropriations; and proposals that there be fewer secret sessions of committees as they consider or draft legislation. This problem applies especially in the house.

The Monroney-Madden group has heard, among other things, the suggestion that Congress set up a new joint committee to oversee operations of the immense Central Intelligence Agency. But chances are such a proposal won't get the committee's formal endorsement.

It is not expected to deal with the issue of raising congressional salaries.

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